

GEORGE ALCOTT.

MARCH 25, 1896.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. FENTON, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 2412.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 2412) to remove the charge of desertion now standing against George Alcott on the rolls of the War Department, having considered the same, report it back to the House and recommend its passage.

The evidence shows that this soldier did not return to his regiment after the expiration of his furlough in June, 1865, because on reporting to the proper authorities at Indianapolis, Ind., for the purpose of obtaining transportation to his regiment, he was informed that, as the war was over, no transportation was being furnished to enable soldiers to reach their commands; that he should either remain in Indianapolis or return to his home, and that he would be notified when wanted. He was not notified, and was not present when his regiment was mustered out.

The evidence submitted by officers and soldiers of his regiment seems to support the claims of the petitioner.

The following is the report in the case from the Record and Pension Office, addressed to Senator Manderson:

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, February 14, 1891.

SIR: In compliance with your request (received to-day) for a transcript of the record in the case of George Alcott, late member of Company C, One hundred and Fifty-second Indiana Volunteers, I am directed by the Secretary of War to inform you as follows:

The official records show this soldier to have been enrolled February 15, 1865, for the period of one year, and to have been mustered into service February 17 following. He appears to have been granted a twenty days' furlough on May 24, 1865, and failing to rejoin his command upon its expiration, he is reported on the company muster-out roll, dated Charleston, W. Va., August 30, 1865, as follows: "Absent, deserted; left Summit Point, Va., May 24, 1865, on twenty days' furlough, and never returned." He is regarded as having deserted June 12, 1865.

The following is a synopsis of the testimony heretofore submitted to the Department in connection with application for removal of the charge of desertion, to wit:

Under date of October 8, 1830, the soldier testified that he received a furlough for twenty days from May 24, 1865, and that upon its expiration he reported to the proper officers at Indianapolis, Ind., on June 13, 1865, for transportation to his regiment, but which was refused him for the reason, as the officers alleged, that they had received orders not to forward any more men, as the war had ended and regiments were about to return to be mustered out; that the said officers took his name and post-office address, and directed him to either remain in Indianapolis or to return to his home, and they would inform him when to return for muster out; that his regiment came back and was mustered out without his knowledge, the said officers having failed to notify him; that he would have rejoined his regiment had he not been prevented from doing so by the officers in power and command at Indianapolis.

There is no record of the man at Indianapolis subsequent to May, 1865.

George E. Young, late lieutenant and adjutant, and George P. Alexander, late captain Company C, One hundred and fifty-second Indiana Volunteers, under dates of October 8 and 9, respectively, testified that upon their arrival home at the close of the war they learned that the soldier had attempted to rejoin his regiment and got as far as Indianapolis, but was unable to go any farther on account of the close of the war.

On January 4, 1890, the Department held that as "this man's service prior to May 1, 1865, amounted to a less period than six months, and as his assertion of reporting at Indianapolis and of being refused transportation is not borne out by the records, favorable action can not be taken under the law, and the application must be denied."

Robert Moore, under date of March 1, 1890, testified that he remembered meeting the soldier on the morning in which he said he was going to his regiment from his furlough; that he (affiant) met the soldier at his gate just as he started, and remembered distinctly what he told affiant, who had every reason to believe that he told the truth, as he had on knapsack, etc., "and is now, and he has been, a man of good reputation."

James Collins testified, March 12, 1890, that he was a member of Company C, One hundredth Indiana Volunteers, and that about June, 1865, while returning to his command from furlough, he met the soldier, also on furlough, at Elkhart, Ind., the soldier declaring that he was going to Indianapolis for the purpose of rejoining his command, to which place affiant accompanied him.

This affiant (Collins) corroborated the soldier's testimony as to reporting to the officers at Indianapolis for transportation to his regiment, and to the refusal of the officers to furnish it, on the ground that his regiment was about to return to be mustered out.

Collins, as a member of Company C, One hundredth Indiana Volunteers, entered the general hospital at Indianapolis on May 17, 1865, and was mustered out there June 13, 1865, on an individual muster-out roll.

On April 15, 1890, the Department held that the additional testimony presented did not warrant a reversal of the former adverse decision, and the application was again denied.

Since that date the status of the soldier has not been changed by the introduction of new testimony.

Very respectfully,

F. C. AINSWORTH,

Captain and Assistant Surgeon United States Army.

Hon. CHARLES F. MANDERSON,
United States Senate